

A Fundraising Challenge

2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Program. With 48 chapters statewide and over 11,000+ trained volunteers, the TMN Program has made enormous contributions to the management, conservation, and restoration of Texas's natural wonder as well as educating our communities about the natural world. Without the work of Master Naturalists our state would be qualitatively poorer and many of its ecosystems more degraded.

The Alamo Area Chapter feels a certain pride in our role as the first Texas chapter and a special responsibility to help grow and strengthen the state organization. That is why we would like to challenge the other state chapters to join us in raising \$20,000 for the TMN Endowment Fund over the following one year period to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the TMN Program.

The Alamo Area Chapter will commit to raising up to \$1,000 of that goal. We encourage each chapter to set their own target in this effort. You may choose to meet or exceed our commitment, to pledge \$10 per member of your chapter, or \$100 for each year your chapter has been active. There are many ways to choose your target and they're all good!

This is a competition in which we all win because a stronger state organization lifts all boats.

Why do we need a fully funded TMN Endowment? In short, because the current level of funding the program receives now only allows for a minimum level of functionality, specifically the office run by Michelle and Mary Pearl. Pretty much everything else is volunteered. And if volunteer resources are not available, projects are not done, no matter what their importance. With a fully funded endowment, the state organization would be able to do such things as fund Master Naturalist projects across the state, hire additional staff for program support, improve members' access to useful technology, and many other improvements statewide in support of the important volunteer work we do.

The fully funded TMN Endowment target is \$5 million. Currently, the endowment has about \$15,000 in it so you can see we have our work cut out for us. But difficult tasks are nothing new for Master Naturalists! So let's get to work!

If you have not heard about the Endowment, considerable information can be found at <https://masternaturalistendowment.org/>.

Each chapter can raise money internally from chapter funds available, taking donations from chapter members, using funds raised from public events, or if local partnership organizations want to contribute to your chapter. Then your chapter can make a donation to the Endowment, selecting to name your contribution in honor of your chapter. Donations can be made online, linked here:

<https://masternaturalistendowment.org/steward/donate-now/>.

A final tally of chapters donating and rising to this challenge will be presented at the TMN Annual Meeting in 2018. But again, the whole program benefits from a sustainable state program with funds to perpetuate the Master Naturalists goals for future generations and another 20 years to celebrate!